THE SEA-MAN'S Obligations to Gratitude and a Good Life.

A

SERMON

Preach'd in the Parish-Church of *Deptford*, in *Kent*, *June* 5. 1699.

BEFORE THE Corporation of the Trinity-House, At their Annual Meeting on Trinity-Monday.

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Pſalm CVII. Verſe 23, 24.

They that go down to the Sea in Ships, and do buſineſs in great Waters:
Theſe Men ſee the Works of the Lord, and his Wonders in the Deep.

THis Pſalm hath been interpreted by ſome, as if it were one intire Allegory: The four Temporal Calamities mentioned here, denoting ſo many Spiritual Puniſhments, or Troubles upon the Mind. The Want and Wand'ring in the Wilderneſs, figuring Mens Errors and Ignorance of the right way to their Heavenly Country: The Captivity and Exile, thoſe Difficulties in doing well, with which long offending does, as it were, clog and fetter hard'ned and habitual Sinners: the Sickneſs and want of Appetite, reſembling that general diſreliſh to Virtue, and the things of God and Eternity, which attends a carnal Life, and worldly Diſpoſition: And the Storms and Dangers at Sea made uſe of as a fit Emblem for the Trials and Toſſings of a boiſterous World, particularly for the Perſecutions of Good Men and the Truth: And ſince from all theſe things too God in his Mercy delivers Men upon their earneſt

Auguſt. Enarr. in hunc Pſal.

V. 3--8

V. 10--15.

V. 17--22.

V. 23--31.

neſt Application to him, therefore *David* calls upon all thoſe for their Sacrifice of Thanks and Praiſe, who have at any time receiv'd ſuch valuable Bleſſings.

Chryſoſtom. Hieronym. Others there are, who have thought this a Prophecy of the Goſpel-Age; and, that by the Men in my Text particularly, who *go down to the Sea in Ships, and do buſineſs in great Waters*, are meant thoſe Apoſtles of our Bleſſed Saviour, who, from the Trade of Fiſhermen, were choſen to be Preachers of the Chriſtian Faith: That *theſe Men ſaw the Works of the Lord, and his Wonders in the Deep*, when God reveal'd to them the profound Myſteries of the New Covenant: Such as the Redemption of Mankind by a crucified Jeſus, the Trinity of Perſons in the Divine Eſſence, (which the Church, at this Seaſon more eſpecially, adores) and ſundry other Doctrines of our moſt Holy Religion, which no reach of humane Reaſoning can fathom, no Wit could have diſcovered, had not God's own Spirit led Men into the Knowledge and Belief of them.

But, waving theſe more diſtant Conſtructions, I ſhall keep cloſe to that moſt obvious and natural one, which the Pſalmiſt ſeems to have had firſt, if not only, in his view: And that is, from a Conſideration of the ſeveral Events of humane Life, whether they be proſperous or adverſe, whether private or publick, to awaken and ſtir Men up to a remembrance of God and their Duty. For, that ſuch was his Deſign, ſeems abundantly manifeſt from that remarkable

markable Concluſion of the Pſalm (V. 43.) *Whoſo is wiſe will obſerve theſe things, and they ſhall underſtand the Loving Kindneſs of the Lord.*

Now, though ſuch a wiſe Obſervation be, no doubt, intended here, as, by convincing Men, that all theſe things are ordered by the Providence of God, might be a powerful Motive to the diſcharge of every part of their Duty; yet the Effect of it principally aimed at, is Thankſgiving; Publiſhing the *Praiſes* of that *God for his Goodneſs*, and *declaring the Wonders that he doth for the Children of Men.* This is the Exhortation ſo often repeated, and ſo earneſtly inculcated here, and urged from a Recollection of the many Afflictions and ſore Diſtreſſes, out of which the Great Governor of the World, who diſpoſes our Fortunes of every kind, reſcues them, who in Extremity flee to Him for Refuge. This Acknowledgment he calls upon all People to pay; becauſe the Inſtances of the Divine Goodneſs are ſo many, ſo conſpicuous, that it muſt argue great Inadvertency, not to ſee, and reflect upon them, when they happen to Others: But this he requires in a peculiar manner from Them, who have had Experience of that Goodneſs themſelves. For, if the eminent Proofs of ſuch a Providence ought, and will naturally not fail, to move us, when we are meer Standers by, and Spectators only; it muſt certainly betray a very wretched degree of Stupidity, and a horrible Unworthineſs, for Men to continue in-

V. 1
V. 2
V. 3

grateful and inſenſible, who have perſonally felt and taſted that the Lord is gracious: For ſuch to retain no becoming Impreſſions, no religious Remembrances, of either thoſe amazing Dangers, or thoſe ſeaſonable and wonderful Preſervations, which have been brought home to them, and made their own Caſe.

Again, if barren Deſarts, and dark Priſons; if Beds of Languiſhing and Storms at Sea, do, by an almoſt irreſiſtible Neceſſity, drive the profaneſt and moſt profligate Wretches to their Prayers: and, if, when ſuch as theſe *cry unto the Lord in their trouble,* V. 5, 13, 19, 28. *he* do not diſdain to hear, and *deliver them out of their diſtreſs*; What can excuſe thoſe Vagabonds and Captives, thoſe once ſick, and juſt ſinking Men, if they ſhall not be as liberal and as loud in their Praiſes afterwards, as formerly they were in their Calls and Complaints; if they ſhall neglect to teſtifie before all the World, that they look upon God as their Saviour and mighty Deliverer, and own their preſent Safety and Succeſſes to be entirely the Work of a Wiſe, and Kind, and Omnipotent Providence?

This is evidently the Sum of the Prophet's Argument in the Pſalm before us: The Force whereof might without great difficulty be illuſtrated from any of the Caſes ſpecified in it; but from never a one of them, I think, to better advantage, than that to which my Text, and the Quality of this

Audience

Audience and Solemnity, now determine me. For if there be any ſort of People, who have not only obſerved, but perpetually converſed with, invincible demonſtrations of a God and Providence; if any, whoſe Obligations to Religion and Thankfulneſs are more ſenſible, more indiſpenſable, than thoſe of Common Men, where may we reaſonably expect to find theſe, rather than among them; *who go down to the Sea in Ships and do buſineſs in great Waters*, who in ſo ſignal a manner *ſee the VVorks of the Lord, and his VVonders in the Deep*?

The Perſons ſpoken of in my Text, are not they who make Voiages of Pleaſure or Convenience, but ſuch as make the Sea their Occupation, and conſtant way of living. And to theſe I ſhall direct my Diſcourſe at preſent, by treating of the Words, and the thing intended by them, under the Two following Heads.

I. *Firſt*, I ſhall endeavour, I will not ſay, to inform, (for who can fairly be ſuppos'd ignorant of ſo obvious and evident a Truth?) but rather to put ſuch in remembrance, that the Dangers and Deliverances peculiar to this courſe of Life, are the Effects of a Divine Providence. And then, *Secondly*,

II. I ſhall ſhew what Influence this Conſideration ought to have upon all, who have had the Experience

Experience of ſuch a watchful and powerful Providence over them.

I. Firſt, I ſay, the Dangers and Deliverances proper to a Sea-faring Life are eminently the Effects of a Divine Providence. The ſame Reaſon, which convinces every thinking Man, that this material World, and each part of it, muſt needs have been framed by ſome Eternal and Infinite Being, will, when purſued through its juſt Conſequences, teach us to conclude alſo, that theſe things now can no more govern and preſerve themſelves, than they could originally make themſelves. The wond'rous Order and regular Proceſs, obſervable in Natural Cauſes and Effects, do indeed illuſtrate the Wiſdom and Management; but they do by no means weaken the Belief, or take away the Neceſſity, of a Higher and Super-intending Power. For, that theſe lower Agents do in moſt Caſes operate alike, proves them to be confined to Rule and Method; but, that they do not always produce the ſame Effects, is no leſs an Evidence, that they are under the direction of a Supreme Cauſe, which checks, and limits, and over-rules their Influences, as he ſees fit. Thus both the regular and the excepted Caſes conſpire to prove the Being and Providence of God. Since there is in all the Works of Nature ſo much Conſtancy, as argues the World to be govern'd by an intelligent Being; and yet ſo much variety

variety in Events, and ſo ſurprizing Changes too, as evince that Being to be an Agent free in his Determinations, and abſolute in his Dominion; that none of the moſt uniform Productions are fixed by a fatal Neceſſity; none of the moſt efficacious Means ſo ſure of ſucceeding, as never to be put by their ordinary Courſe; none, in a word, exempted from the Countermand of his Diſpoſal.

We ſhall do well then to conceive of Almighty God, as of a wiſe and watchful Pilot, always at the Helm, and ſteering his own World, taking the advantage of natural Inſtruments, and letting this great Veſſel drive before them, ſo long as theſe, like proſperous Gales and favourable Tides, make way for his good Purpoſes: But when they bear down hard, and grow too violent, then interpoſing his Skill and Strength, ſhifting the Courſe, or checking the Current, or by ſome other Arts to us unknown, bringing the moſt furious, the moſt irreſiſtible Efforts of Created Nature in Subjection to the Counſel of his own Will.

And if this be, as certainly it is, the State of Providence, and the World in general, then, where theſe Interpoſitions are moſt frequent and viſible; where ſuch Agents and Cauſes, as ſeem moſt ungovernable, do yet ſubmit to ſuch Reſtraints, and become flexible and uſeful; where Humane Meaſures, which can only proceed upon regular and ordinary Operations, are moſt impotent, and manifeſtly

feſtly at a loſs; there we cannot, with any fair and probable Reaſoning, but aſcribe ſuch Events, as are contrary to, or above the reach of, Matter and Motion, to the marvelous Addreſs and commanding Efficacy of that wiſe and powerful Lord, who (as this Pſalmiſt ſays elſewhere) *ſitteth in the Heavens, and ruleth over all from the beginning.*

Pſal. 103. 19.

Upon this Account, we may very well imagine, it is, that the Scripture does, upon all occaſions, take ſuch particular Care to aſſert and inculcate that Government, which God exerciſes over the Winds and the Seas: For theſe are parts of Nature, fierce and impetuous above the reſt, various and uncertain in their Motions; the moſt unaccountable, the moſt unmanageable, of all the Creatures in this lower World; and, by conſequence, the moſt pregnant Teſtimonies of an over-ruling Providence, in all thoſe aſtoniſhing and mighty Alterations, which we ſo frequently perceive in them. Hence God is ſaid to *a ſet bounds to the* Sea, *b* to *ſhake it*, *c* to *ſhut it up with doors*; to *d dry it up*, to *e rebuke it*, to ſtill *f its roarings*, and *ſilence the noiſe of its Waves when they rebel*; and that, *g though its Waters be mad, and rage horribly, yet ſtill the Lord who dwelleth on high is mightier.* So again, the Winds are very emphatically ſtiled the *h* Winds of God, and the *i* Breath of God; with theſe he is ſaid *to blow*, and the *waters ſwell*; Theſe *k* he *brings out of his Treaſures*; *with*

a Jer. 5 22.
b Hag. 2. 7.
c Job 38. 8.
d Iſai. 50. 2.
e Nah. 1. 4.
f Pſal. 89. 8. 65. 7.
g Pſal. 93. 5.
h Pſal. 148. 8.
i Job 37. 9, 10.
k Pſal. 135. 7.

with theſe he *l rends the Mountains, ſcatters his Cold and Froſt, m ſtraitens the Waters, and hardens them like ſolid Metal.* And farther yet, for theſe he is ſaid to make *n* Weights and Meaſures, to *o* ſtay their roughest and moſt tumultuous Inſults, quell all their boiſterous Rage, and with a *Peace be ſtill*, huſh their Noiſe and Confuſion into a profound Calm. And, to go no farther than this Paſſage now before us; the *Works* and *Wonders* here aſcrib'd to God, are expreſſed (V. 25, *&c.*) by the *Storm ariſing at his Word*, the Waves of the Sea rolling and foaming, toſſing Men up to Heaven, and ſinking them down again to Hell; driving them to their Wits end, and damping the very ſtouteſt of them all; and yet, even then, when neither Courage nor Conduct, neither Hearts nor Hands are of any longer Service, God continues the ſame ſtill: He is not deaf to Men's Prayers; nor are theſe rudeſt and moſt rugged of all Elements deaf to his Reproofs, but even the Storms fulfill his Word, and blow but by Commiſſion: He finds no difficulty in quieting the Tempeſt, and ſmoothing the Face of the Deep; but raiſes and inſtantly fixes the hearts melted down with Anguiſh and Deſpair juſt before, and makes them glad by ſetting them *at reſt, and bringing them to the Haven, where they would be.* This gets him an indiſputable Title to ſuch Men's Praiſes; The ſuccouring them in an Extremity, when humane helps could avail nothing, when even Hope it ſelf was

l Pſal. 29. and 148. *m* Job 37. 10. *n* Job 28. 25. *o* Iſa. 27. 8.

Ver. 30.

 loſt,

loſt, when any Power leſs than divine muſt have been defeated in the Attempt to deliver them.

But in all Caſes of this Nature, it is not enough to be ſatisfied that God is the Doer and Diſpoſer of them, unleſs we be likewiſe careful to obſerve with what deſign he does them, and what thoſe Purpoſes are, which he would have ſerved, by the hardſhips we ſuſtain, the dangers we are threat'ned with, and the ſurprizing Reſcues from, or Succeſſes after them.

Now, though we are not allow'd to judge of the Proportion of any Man's Virtue or Guilt, or God's Love or Hatred toward him, by that meaſure of Good or Evil, which befals him in this preſent Life: Yet thus much in the general is true, that all Afflictions are, and ought to be received, as Chaſtiſements of Sin, and all Deliverances acknowledged as Marks of God's Favour and Kindneſs. Bleſſings, 'tis true, may by our own Miſmanagement be converted into Curſes and Inſtruments of Ruine: And Sufferings, by a prudent Virtue, may be exalted into the moſt valuable Mercies. The former may be plentifully imparted to the Wicked, and the latter made the Portion of the Juſt: But ſtill this hinders not, why, ſpeaking of theſe Diſpenſations at large, the Pſalmiſt here, and we by his Example, may not attribute Mens Calamities to their Faults which had provoked God; and their better Succeſſes to ſome behaviour well-

well-pleasing in his sight. Thus we find *Mens being bound in Affliction and Iron*, charged *upon their rebelling against the Words of God*, and *contemning the Counsel of the most High*. And *Fools* are said, *because of their Transgression to be plagued with Sickness, to abhor all manner of Meat, and to draw nigh to the Gates of Death.* V. 9. 10. V. 17, &c.

It is confest, that no such Cause is positively assigned here; but sure there is nothing particular in the reason of the thing, which should forbid us applying it to Storms and Shipwrecks, as well as to Imprisonment and Bodily Diseases. But in the Mercies mentioned throughout this Psalm, there is no Place for probable Conjectures; for in every one of these, express Notice is taken of its being a Reward to them, who fled to God for Succour, and took Sanctuary in Him, when other Helps and Comforts had forsaken them. And hence the Duty of Praise is urged as a necessary Instance of Gratitude, for so ready an Acceptance, so successful a Return, of such Prayers: For that you see is the constant burthen of this Holy Song; *When they cried unto the Lord in their Trouble, and he delivered them out of their Distress: O that Men would therefore praise the Lord for his Goodness, and declare the Wonders that he doth for the Children of Men.* V. 8. 13. 15, 19, 21, 28, 31.

Without entring then into any Niceties concerning this Matter, or shewing how far temporal Good and Evil are from distinguishing Characters of the Divine Affection and Displeasure, though at the same time the One be most truly the Effect of God's

Goodneſs, and the Other of Man's Sin; I ſhall take it for granted, that all who conſider the different Events of humane Life to be the Work of God, do likewiſe allow them to be wrought with ſome wiſe Deſign; and that each ſort requires ſome Uſe and Improvement to be made of it, in proportion to its Nature and Quality: And thus much is ſufficient to ground my other general Head upon, wherein I propoſed to ſhew,

II. *Secondly*, What Influence the Conſideration of Mens Dangers and Deliverances being all from God, ought to have upon Them, whoſe own Experience hath convinced them of ſuch a watchful and powerful Providence; ſuch, as is over thoſe particularly, *who by going down to the Sea in Ships, and following their buſineſs in great Waters, have ſeen the Works of the Lord, and his Wonders in the Deep.*

The only Fruit inſiſted on here is Thankfulneſs; nor had the Prophet occaſion to demand more; for this alone, when rightly grounded, and diligently cultivated, is ſo noble a Product, and of ſo large Extent, that, as to be reproached with Unthankfulneſs is a Character of univerſal Infamy; ſo to be truly thankful for the Mercies of God, is, in the juſt Latitude of the Word, but another Name for a Good Man, and a Good Chriſtian. For

1. No Man doubts, but this implies never dying Remembrances, and very warm and affectionate Reſentments of the Benefits we have received.

ceived. And, in regard that out of ſuch abundance of the Heart the Mouth will naturally ſpeak, from hence will follow,

2. Free and publick Declarations of God's Love and Mercy upon all fit Occaſions. Nor yet only ſo, but

3. A conſtant Care not to diſpleaſe or affront One, who hath been ſo bountiful to, and tender of Us. For to profeſs grateful Reſentments, without atteſting to them by reſpectful Behaviour, is manifeſt Inſincerity; and to proclaim our Obligations to a Perſon, whom we diſoblige in return, is to reproach our ſelves with the greateſt Baſeneſs, and to publiſh our Hypocriſy to all the World. Nay,

4. True Gratitude will think it ſelf concerned to vindicate the Honour, and promote the Advantage, of its Benefactor. And That which is ſo toward God, will ſtudy to advance his Glory; and by Example, Perſwaſion, or ſuch other Methods, as the Perſon's Circumſtances qualify him for, will labour to gain over others to a reverent and juſt Opinion of Him, and of that Religion, which he is pleaſed in condeſcenſion to call his Cauſe and Intereſt, and the doing him Service.

5. A Man truly Thankful for Succours received heretofore, will, with great Contentedneſs and a chearful Faith, depend upon God in any Diſtreſſes for the time to come. Even our Friends upon Earth take it ill to be diſtruſted, who yet have little in their

their Power, and but ſeldom very much in their Will. But what can be a greater Indignity, than to ſuſpect the Care, or be uneaſy under the Conduct, of that Friend above, who cannot deceive, who will not forſake us; eſpecially after many ſenſible and ſurpriſing Experiments, both of his Inclination, and his Ability, to do us good?

6. Laſtly, They who are Thankful for paſt Deliverances, will be compaſſionate to others in the like Danger and Diſtreſs. The Remembrance of their own Caſe will diſpoſe them to this Tenderneſs, as Men; and, as Chriſtians, they will need no other Incitement, than this ſingle Reflection, That they who relieve the leaſt of their Lord's Members, do it to Himſelf. So that This is in effect a paying back the Kindneſs; a Thing which true Gratitude eagerly takes all Opportunities of doing. And, though the Return be not made, either in Kind, or in Quantity, yet it is ſuch as poor Mortals are capable of; ſuch as argues their Wiſhes and Readineſs to do more; and ſuch as He, whoſe Debtors they are, is content to accept for good Payment.

Theſe are all ſo genuine, ſo neceſſary Evidences of Thankfulneſs; and the Reaſonableneſs of them is ſo obvious, that I ſhall not hold my ſelf obliged to enlarge upon our Engagements to them. No Benefactor among Men looks upon himſelf well treated upon other Terms; and he, who declines any of theſe upon proper Occaſions, all his diſſembled

bled Professions ought, and will be sure with Wisemen, to go for nothing. And therefore all I shall do more, is only to apply my self to this Assembly, with regard to each of the foregoing Particulars, and so conclude.

1. First then: For the begetting in you becoming Resentments for the Mercies of God in your Preservation, I shall not, I need not, attempt any artificial Description of the infinite Hazards, or surprizing Providences, peculiar to that manner of Life, in which the Education and Affairs of so many now before me have engaged them: The Wonders and the Works of Wisdom, which conversing with remote Countries hath made you Eye-witnesses of; nor the Difficulties and sundry kinds of Death, which distant Climates, and especially your Passage to and from them, have so often exposed you to. You know very well, that the Terrours of a Storm, or a Wreck, are but feebly represented by Words; and that Experience leaves behind it more lively and lasting Images of this kind, than all the laboured Rhetorick in the World. The Ancients seem to have so just a Notion of this Matter, as to make it almost a Proverb, That *He who hath never been at Sea, can scarcely know what it is to be in Danger.* And then surely They who have known, and felt, and lived constantly in, and often escaped from This; This, in comparison whereof nothing it seems was esteemed dreadful enough to deserve the Name

O fortunate nescis quantum periculi præteriris, qui nunquam es ingressus Mare.

of

of Danger, theſe Men cannot eaſily be ſuppoſed ever to forget it.

And yet it muſt be confeſs'd, with regard to Your Caſe, that thoſe Ancients were but little, and the Age of *David* not at all, acquainted with the moſt formidable part of that, which Your good God hath carried You through. The only Perils They had in view, were ſuch as grow from Winds, and Waves, and warring Elements: Nor were Men then aware of any other End of *going down to the Sea in Ships*, but that of *doing* the *Buſineſs* of Traffick there. And, What is the Fatigue, What the Hazard of This, when ſet againſt the very diſtant Uſes which later Times have found for theſe *Great Waters*, and the fatal Improvement ſince made to their Dangers? For, as if even the moſt mercileſs Parts of the Creation had been too ſparing and tender of our Safety, the Men induſtrious in the Art of Killing, have brought the Two moſt cruel, the Two moſt diſtant Elements in the World, to conſpire together, and mutually to aſſiſt in the more effectual Deſtruction of Mankind. They have contrived to burn one another in the Water, to drown their Enemies in liquid Fire, to turn their Veſſels into floating Batteries, and make the Ocean itſelf a Field of Blood. It is in this moſt frightful Form, that ſeveral of You have often met Death: And ſhall I ſuppoſe it poſſible, that ſuch complicated Horrours can ever ſlip out of your Minds? That

you

you ſhould not frequently and ſeriouſly recollect, who made ſo gracious a Diſtinction in the Day of Battle, when Thouſands fell beſide you, and Ten thouſand at your Right-hand, and yet the fatal Ball came not nigh you? No, no. You ſtand here this Day ſo many living Monuments of Mercy, ſo many undeniable Demonſtrations of a wonderful Providence; and you muſt not, you cannot forget God, while you continue to remember your ſelves.

2. If then this be, as I ought to preſume it is, the inward Senſe of your Souls, your Obligations to the *Second* Thing are very apparent, That of making your Thanks ſolemn and publick. This the Prophet requires (Ver. 32.) that ſuch as have eſcaped the Perils of the Sea, *would exalt God in the Congregation of the People, and praiſe him in the Seat of the Elders.* His meaning is, That theſe open Acknowledgments are a Tribute due for Deliverances ſo eminent; becauſe they ſet forth the Glory of God, they put others upon obſerving, how Wiſe, and Powerful, and Good he is, and encourage all that ſee and hear them, to ſerve and depend upon One ſo Able, ſo Ready, to help them that ſeek him. But there is yet another Reaſon, which ſhould move Them to it, whoſe Lives have been expoſed upon the publick Account: For it is no ſmall Mercy, that God hath made Such, Inſtruments of a general Good to their Country. You therefore are bound, above all Men, to *praiſe God in the Congregation of the*

People, becauſe the whole Congregation will not fail to praiſe God, not only with you, but for you. If Trade flouriſh, and Wealth increaſe, it is becauſe Your Induſtry and Courage tranſplant the Product of diſtant Countries hither, and make all their Conveniencies ours. If this Iſland enjoy the Benefits of its happy Situation, it is becauſe that Sea, which God hath made our Rampart and Entrenchment, hath been ſtoutly defended by our Navies: Without theſe, the Nation muſt be ſo far from rich and proſperous, that it could not ſo much as be ſafe. And that which renders us ſo uſeful to our Friends, ſo formidable to our Enemies, and ſo ſecure from Foreign Invaſions, is not ſo much our Numbers, or our Home-growth, or our Wall of Waters; as the Advantages of our Commerce Abroad, and the invincible Valour of our Fleets at Home. This we juſtly eſteem our proper Strength, and to it, under God, aſcribe our Glory and Protection: And therefore They who do gallantly, and are ſucceſsful upon theſe Occaſions, are much to blame, if They do not publiſh the Praiſes of God, becauſe they are ſure to meet with ſo many diſpoſed to join in thoſe Praiſes with them. For ſuch we pray and faſt when in Action and Danger; and, in ſo doing, we pray and faſt for our ſelves. And when ſuch return with Victory or Peace, they engage us to come into their Thanks, not only as Chriſtians, but as Parties; not out of Fellow-feeling, but Self-

love

love. Their Intereſt and ours is one and the ſame; we all find a vaſt account in their Safety; and, in their Conqueſts and Deliverances, do in effect commemorate our own.

3. But, *Thirdly*, They who have proceeded thus far, ought to be put in mind, that the moſt ſubſtantial Part of Thankfulneſs is ſtill behind; that, I mean, which conſiſts in the Man's Actions and Behaviour. For, as in ſuch Benefactors among Men, whoſe Condition ſets them ſo much above us, that they do not need, or we cannot repay what we have received from them, in kind, the only way left us to teſtifie our Gratitude, is by reſpecting, and pleaſing, and doing them Honour and Service; ſo, and much more is it, in the Benefits we receive from the Great and moſt High God. We are therefore taught in our excellent Liturgy to pray for ſuch a due ſenſe of his Mercies, as may make us *unfeignedly thankful*, and prove that *we are ſo, by ſhewing forth his Praiſe, not only with our Lips, but in our Lives.* Now, if the beſtowing Life and Being at firſt do veſt in him a Title to our Obedience, then, ſo oft as this Gift is repeated, ſo much the more that Claim is ſtrengthned. The very Deſign, in truth, of all his Bleſſings is to invite, and encourage, and (by Engagements, the moſt forcible of any to an ingenuous Temper) even to conſtrain us to Virtue and Goodneſs; to make us in love with ſo kind a Maſter, and chearful in doing our utmoſt for Him, who hath done

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ſo much for Us. And which way can We evade this Obligation, eſpecially when the moſt we can do for him is ſo much leſs than his due, and the leaſt he hath done for us ſo much more than our deſert? After a long Recital of the many Miracles in behalf of the *Iſraelites*, God is ſaid to have wrought them all for this very purpoſe, *that they might keep his Statutes, and obſerve his Laws.* And in another Place, this is mention'd as the dreadfulleſt aggravation of that Peoples wickedneſs, that *they forgot, and rebelled againſt God, who had done ſo great things for them.* But what need I urge Chriſtian-Inſtances and Arguments, when nothing can be plainer from the very Nature of Gratitude, than that each Perſon ought to make his diligence in pleaſing God hold proportion with the marks of his having been the peculiar Care of his Providence, and be as ſignally religious, as he hath been ſignally bleſſed?

Pſal. 15. 44.

Pſal. 78.

If then, as was before obſerved, the Affairs of ſo many here preſent have been ſo full of hazard, and their Deliverances ſo full of wonder, it will lye upon their Conſciences very ſeriouſly to examine, what ſort of requital they have made for theſe Mercies. Moſt certain it is, God does not ſave Men from the Sea, and the Sword, that when they come aſhore *they may give themſelves up to the* Devil's *Service*, and *walk before him without fear in Unholineſs and Unrighteouſneſs all the days of their life.* He expects to have his Name called upon after another manner, than in Oaths, and

and Curſes, and blaſphemous Terms of Defiance and Contempt. He will account ſeverely with thoſe Wretches, who dare his Vengeance, and cry aloud to him to rot thoſe Bodies, and to damn thoſe Souls, which he with ſo Fatherly a Tenderneſs hath reſcued from Deſtruction. My Deſign herein is not to upbraid, or accuſe, but ſeaſonably to warn, the Men of this Profeſſion, that they would conſider in time, how large an Article in their laſt great Account the Good Providence of God over them in their Dangers and Neceſſities will one day make; and that it were better, infinitely better for them, to have fallen by the Enemies hand, or to have been drown'd in the depth of the Sea, than to have ſurvived both to no other Effect, than that moſt ſad one of enflaming their Reckoning, and heating their Furnace ſeven times hotter, by their horrible Ingratitude and Abuſe of ſuch marvelous Loving Kindneſs.

4. But I ſaid before, *Fourthly*, that a true Principle of Thankfulneſs will not allow Men to be contented with their own private Virtue, but will render them zealous Promoters of God's Glory, by winning over others to his Service. The Methods and Opportunities for effecting this differ greatly, according to Mens different Stations and Capacities in the World. But I eſteem my ſelf happy in addreſſing this day to ſeveral worthy Perſons, whoſe Authority and Poſts of Command may be exceeding uſeful in this Particular: Perſons, whoſe good Example

may

may inſpire, and whoſe Diſcipline may enforce, the Exerciſe of Religion; At leaſt theſe could not fail to diſcountenance Vice, and give a check to the Inſolence of open Immorality and Profaneneſs. You are, my Brethren, Men of Honour; and that Character will not endure, that your Prince, or your Friend ſhould be ill treated in your Preſence: Can it then conſiſt with this Character patiently to ſee and hear the King of kings, and your beſt Friend above, affronted and reviled? Your Honourable Society derives its Name from the holy and ever-bleſſed Trinity; and will not that Title reproach every Member of this Body, who, without puniſhment or due rebuke, ſhall ſuffer the Majeſty of the *Father* to be deſpiſed, the Blood and Wounds of the *Son* to be invoked in ſport and deriſion, and contemptuous deſpite to be done to the *Spirit of Grace*? The moſt glorious Improvement of Navigation would be to ſpread Chriſtianity wider, and enlighten the ſtill dark Corners of the Earth with ſaving Knowledge; and the readieſt way of compaſſing this noble end would be, by making the Light of thoſe who already profeſs the Goſpel, ſo to ſhine in barbarous Countries, that our good Works might recommend, and demonſtrate the Excellence of our Faith.

Live then, my Brethren, as becomes them whom the Lord hath redeem'd, and deliver'd from Perils various, and Deaths oft: Live ſo, that Strangers who

who are not yet acquainted with the Doctrine of *Jeſus*, may read it plainly in your Converſations: Live ſo, that, having firſt reform'd your ſelves, you may, with boldneſs and a good grace, reprove, and ſet about reforming others. And let thoſe under your Conduct ſee, that you are in very good earneſt; and that you think the Honour of your Poſt concerned for no ſort of Order and Diſcipline more, than for that, which hath reſpect to Virtue, and Religion. It hath been ſaid formerly, that *he who would learn to be devout ſhould go to Sea*: And, I dare ſay, You would be loath to have ſuch an Infamy fall upon Your days, as that of reverſing the Obſervation, and having the Sea thought the ready Courſe for transforming Men into Infidels and Brutes. As therefore you have done in the Cauſe of your King and Country, ſo behave your ſelves valiantly in the Cauſe of your God. Vice, it is true, hath gathered ſtrength, and with an unuſual confidence ſeems to bid all good Men Battle. But Vice is never ſo triumphant, that Reſolution may not bring it under. Let but that Gallantry appear in this Point, ſo peculiar to the Fleets of *England* in others, that of bearing down upon the Enemy again and again, and the day is certainly your own. Sin carries Shame and Cowardice in its very Nature, and cannot rally often: And be aſſur'd, this is a Conqueſt, which, when once throughly obtain'd, would bring more Comfort to your ſelves, and more true Honour to your Memories,

Qui neſcit orare, aſcendat mare.

Memories, than thoſe which, at the Expence of ſo much Blood and Toil, tranſmit the Names of this Fraternity down to ſucceeding Generations. Nor are you ever more properly in your Poſt, than when encount'ring this Adverſary; for the Sins of a People, and eſpecially of that part whoſe Duty it is to fight for the reſt, are always the moſt deſtructive Enemy that can make War upon any Nation.

5. When your Zeal for God and the Publick hath thus exerted it ſelf, then are you rightly prepared for the *Fifth* Branch of Thankfulneſs, that of Truſt in God, amidſt any Dangers, which ſhall hereafter threaten or attack you. And, however diſmal theſe may appear, yet your former Experience of that Power and Goodneſs, which hath ſo ſignalized it ſelf on your behalf, will be of mighty uſe towards drawing down upon them with Bravery. For God is never weary of doing good; but his paſt Bleſſings are ſo many Pledges of more and better, provided we be careful not to ſtop the Current; nor by our Unworthineſs, and Abuſe of thoſe already received, put a Bar to his Intentions of future Favour toward us. If then your own lawful Occaſions, or your Country's Defence, ſhall call you out again to the like hazardous Attempts, remember under the ſhadow of whoſe VVings you were ſafe heretofore, and that he is the *the ſame, yeſterday, and to day, and forever, even the Lord, rich in Mercy, and mighty to ſave. He will not forſake his that be godly, nor ſhall*

Heb 13 8.
Iſai 63. 1.
Pſal. 37.

ſhall they be confounded in the perilous Time: So ſays this Pſalmiſt, and ſo infinite Paſſages of Holy Scripture beſides. Places, which deſerve the rather to be conſidered, becauſe, when Art and Nature have done their utmoſt, ſtill nothing goes ſo far toward inſpiring Men with true Courage, and undaunted Preſence of Mind, as an Innocent Life, and a ſted-faſt Faith. Theſe only can furniſh Men with that threefold impenetrable Defence, of which no Terrors can diſarm them, A Good Cauſe, A Good Conſcience, and a Good God.

6. There is yet a *Sixth* Particular behind; and that is, Readineſs to ſuccour all them, whom the like Dangers and Diſaſters have reduced to want your Relief. For, how are you thankful, if the eſcaping theſe do not open your Bowels to ſuch of your Brethren, who actually ſuffer what you had alſo felt, if God in Mercy had not put a difference between You and Them? I have already hinted, that both Common Humanity and Chriſtian Charity jointly plead in this Cauſe: And plead they do, with Arguments, which, ſince too ſtrong to be anſwer'd, ſhould be too powerful to be deny'd. And, in regard, where no Man's Abilities extend to the ſupply of all that want, great Diſcretion is requiſite in the Choice of fit Objects for our Charity; I ſhould not be juſt to the occaſion of our preſent Meeting, did I forbear to ſay, that no Poverty, ſuſtained upon Accounts purely ſecular, no Liberality, which propo-

ſes to it ſelf Civil Advantages only, hath a better Title to our Gifts, than that, wherein diſabled Seamen and their neceſſitous Families are concern'd. Their Claim in truth is ſuch, that I know not whether this Relief ſhould not be rather call'd a Debt, than a Gift. The Wealth of this Nation is in ſo great part imported by thoſe in the Merchants Service, and the quiet Poſſeſſion of the whole ſo manifeſtly ſecured by thoſe in his Majeſty's; that what we beſtow in this way, is but ſome ſmall proportion of that which the Receivers have either help'd to get us, or have hind'red the Enemies taking away from us. And are we Men, if we can ſuffer ſo vile a Reproach, as the ſeeing Thoſe, whoſe Induſtry hath filled our Stores, whoſe Valour hath fought our Battles, at the Expence of whoſe Sweat and Blood it is that our Portion is grown fat and plenteous: If we can bear, I ſay, to ſee Theſe, or their Relicts periſh, when Wounds, and loſs of Limbs, when Sickneſs, or Age, or an untimely Death, have rend'red Them or Theirs incapable any longer, not only of ſerving the Publick, but of ſupporting themſelves? The Rule of Equity, the Senſe of our own Benefit, and the Common Intereſt, which depends ſo much upon giving all due Encouragement (I had almoſt ſaid in giving all Honour and Reſpect) even to the meaneſt Subjects, who ſuffer in their Countries Cauſe, require not only Compaſſion, but Generoſity, from all in Circumſtances to extend it.

But

But moſt of all from You, whom God hath ſo deliver'd, and ſo bleſs'd, as to make that very Employment the Foundation of Your better Fortunes, by which ſo many of your Brethren have ruin'd theirs.

Act for Regiſtring, and encouraging of Seamen.

And, if ſuch Reaſons needed to be ſeconded by Examples, We in this juncture, God be bleſt, abound with them. The Great Council of the Nation have wiſely found their Honour and Safety concern'd to make a laſting Proviſion for this purpoſe. And the Glorious Preſerver of our Rights and Liberties, accounts it no Indignity to a Royal Palace, to be converted into a comfortable Retreat for decay'd, and a fruitful Seminary for growing, Commanders and Mariners. He, who hath been ſo liberal of his own Blood for our Defence, could not but bear a juſt and very tender regard to Them who ſhed Theirs in it. And You, who have ſo well imitated the Courage of your Prince, will, I doubt not, be as powerfully provoked to Charity, by the ſame Argument and Example. The weighty Truſt already repoſed in your hands, and the careful and wiſe Management of it, do not only prove the Diſpoſition of faithful Stewards, but promiſe that of bountiful Benefactors.

Greenwich Hoſpital.

Omitting therefore any farther Enlargement, upon a Subject, which ſpeaks ſo movingly for it ſelf, I conclude all with hearty Prayers to God, That He,

He, who hath ſhewed you the Works and Wonders of his Goodneſs ſo plenteouſly, would give you Grace to be unfeignedly thankful; That he would make you ſucceſsful Inſtruments of promoting his Glory, and the Publick Good, by your Examples, by your Authority, by reforming the Vicious, and ſuppreſſing Debauchery and Profaneneſs in all under your Command; by doing valiantly for your Country, and by ſhewing Mercy to your Brethren in Diſtreſs: In one Word, that God would grant us a Succeſſion of Good and Gallant Men, to maintain the Safety and Dignity of this Nation; thus continuing ever to make the Sea our impregnable Bulwark, and our Fleets, what they ſo long have been, the Protection of our Friends, and the Terror of our Enemies. And to theſe Prayers, I'm ſure, not only You, but every true Engliſhman will ſay: *Amen.*

FINIS.